

Th: Jefferson

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Teachers from Across the Globe Help Create Monticello's New Educational Website

In 1820, Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Marquis de Lafayette, "The boisterous sea of liberty indeed is never without a wave." Jefferson's words have become the namesake of Monticello's newest educational website, *Sea of Liberty*, launched this September.

Original content for the website, including hundreds of primary source documents and images, came from Monticello's extensive *Thomas Jefferson and the Boisterous Sea of Liberty* exhibition in the Michelle Smith Gallery at the Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith Education Center. The website has grown into a multi-functional teaching tool, with new content from current events.

Sea of Liberty encourages teachers to challenge their students to develop projects connecting the foundational ideals of the Declaration of Independence with historical and contemporary debates about liberty, freedom, and equality.

"From the Magna Carta to the Arab Spring, the assertion of many peoples for greater liberty and self-governance has shaped history.

We are excited to offer educators and students new access to liberty-related resources unique to Monticello through *Sea of Liberty*," said Gary Sandling, Vice President of Visitor Services and Programs at Monticello.



Talented teachers from all over the world contributed to the website during a series of forums held at Monticello. *Sea of Liberty* and the teacher forums are part of Liberty Today, an innovative educational initiative launched by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation in 2011, with support from The Coca-Cola Foundation. Liberty Today was created to help disseminate Jefferson's ideas to classrooms around the world through new media.

During the second annual Liberty Today Talented Teacher Forum this summer, 17 teachers from across the globe assisted teams from Monticello and the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University with testing

Teachers gathered at Monticello in 2013 to develop activities and framework for the new website *Sea of Liberty*.



www.SeaofLiberty.org. Teachers collaborated with their colleagues and engaged in dialogue with scholars on the connections between the ideals of liberty and the requirements for self-government and how those ideas and requirements are relevant today.

Well-known Jefferson scholars Frank Cogliano, Peter Onuf, and Annette Gordon-Reed; *Boston Globe* journalist and author Michael Kranish; and research fellows in residence at Monticello's Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies participated in the forum. Professors Rahma Jerad of Tunisia and Amal Idrissi of Morocco shared reflections on how their research in early American history was relevant for the political and social debates taking place in their own countries.

How *Sea of Liberty* Works

Educators and students across the globe can explore documents, letters, artwork, and photographs related to the ideas of liberty, freedom, and self-governance. The core of the collection on *Sea of Liberty* includes images and quotes from the Monticello exhibition *Thomas Jefferson and the Boisterous Sea of Liberty*. The exhibition traces the development and ongoing influence of Jefferson's transformational ideas about liberty, particularly those expressed in the Declaration of Independence. The new website expands on the exhibit, providing new relevant content.

"*Sea of Liberty* has grown to include additional documents and images that represent the story of liberty in today's world. It is a living resource about the ideas of liberty and self-governance," said Gary Sandling, Vice President of Visitor Services and Programs at Monticello.

The website allows visitors to create digital scholarship that draws inspiration from the past, such as digital posters, word clouds, and timelines. The projects can then be shared with others to inspire teachers and students across the globe. In addition, educators have access to resources related to teaching with primary sources, teaching historical thinking, and encouraging digital citizenship.

What Teachers Have to Say about *Sea of Liberty*



"This is not just a website for the colonial era or the road to revolution. This has value throughout the entire school year. I truly plan to train my kids on this website, probably in the second week of school, and continually go back to it. The new standards and common core say 'primary documents, primary documents, primary documents.' Well, here they are, and I'm going to take advantage of it."

— **Winifred Anderson, 6-9th grade, Kaleidoscope Middle School, Otsego, MN**



"I would describe it as a great tool that you could use to let the kids create their own projects and design ways of learning using primary sources."

— **Brian Corman, 8th grade civics, Fairfax County, VA**

"The *Sea of Liberty* website has a great amount of resources and primary documents available within it, and teachers and students are able to browse through them easily."

— **Stephanie Knauss, 8th grade civics and government, Milton, PA**

"As we're exploring different concepts throughout world history, such as the French Revolution, or independence in Latin America, we can go back to some of the ideas in the Declaration of Independence, or some of the ideas that were expressed by our founders, including Thomas Jefferson, and use those to come up with ideas of why these people might be using those ideas to go further and fight for their own independence."

— **Debbie Owen, 6th grade social studies, Longmont, CO**



Nominate a Great Teacher!

Know a teacher who might be interested in participating in the next Liberty Today Talented Teacher Forum? Learn more about the July 2014 forum held at Monticello at www.monticello.org/LibertyToday.

Thank You!

Sea of Liberty was created in partnership with the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University.

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To learn more, visit www.seaofliberty.org.